

p. 520 Selaginella subcaulescens Bak. (*Selaginella sintenisii* Hieron.)

To be added: Selaginella flabellata (L.) Spring.

Selaginella stipitata Spring. Toro Negro.

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THE STATUS OF CAREX INCOMPERTA BICKN.

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In 1908 Eugene P. Bicknell, equally well-known as a student of the New England flora and of its avifauna, described a sedge from Nantucket Island, Massachusetts, as *Carex incomperta*. It had been generally passing as *C. sterilis* Willd., and it is still a problematical plant, showing affinities, as pointed out by Mackenzie (North American Flora 18(2):107.1931), with such diverse allies as *C. cephalantha*, *C. angustior*, *C. howei*, *C. muricata*, *C. interior*, *C. mohrii*, *C. atlantica*, *C. ruthii*, *C. ormantha*, *C. wiegandii* and *C. phyllomanica*. By Mackenzie and most current authors it has been rightly treated as most nearly related to *C. atlantica* Bailey (1893). From this it has been held to differ chiefly in characteristics of the pistillate scales. These are detailed in the following key which is a composite of those of Mackenzie (*op. cit.*), Fernald (Gray's New Manual of Botany, 8th ed., 1952) and Gleason (New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora, 1952).

- Pistillate scales sharply keeled, acutish to short-cuspidate, two-thirds to fully as long as the perigynium-body, the raised, prominent midrib extending to the tip; culms slender, sharply triangular, 1.5-2.5 mm. thick at the base; leaf-blades 1.5-2.5 mm. wide *C. incomperta*.
- Pistillate scales flat or very obscurely keeled, obtuse, half to two-thirds as long as the perigynium-body, the midrib not raised, obsolete or nearly so at the tip; culms stiff, obtusely triangular below, 2-3.5 mm. thick at the base; leaf-blades 1.5-4 mm. wide
..... *C. atlantica*.

Both plants occur in swamps and bogs, particularly in peaty soils, and have a broad range in eastern North America, from Nova Scotia to Florida westward to Texas, but *C. atlantica* is found chiefly on the coastal plain, whereas *C. incomperta* extends inland to Michigan and Indiana.

In their extreme forms these two taxa are fairly distinct, but it is not often that a specimen will be found to be consistent in all of its purported diagnostic characteristics, and throughout most of their over-lapping geographic ranges (particularly in southern New England, I am informed by Mr. Richard J. Eaton) the proportion of intermediates is bewildering. Since correlation of the distinctions is so frequently impossible, it would appear that varietal status would better represent the relationship of *Carex incomperta* to *C. atlantica*, as well as facilitating identification of the plants, so it is here proposed as *Carex atlantica* Bailey var. **incomperta** (Bickn.) F. J. Herm., comb. nov. (*C. incomperta* Bickn., Bull. Torrey Bot. Club 35: 494. 1908).

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